

STATE OF WISCONSIN
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

BUTLER'S GARTERSNAKE STAKEHOLDER NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2007

STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP RESULTS

On February 5th-8th, 2007 the Butler's gartersnake Stakeholder Workshop was held at Boerner Botanical Gardens in Hales Corners, Wisconsin. Sixty people, representing over 40 organizations were in attendance. Philip Miller of the Conservation Breeding Specialist Group (CBSG) designed the process and facilitated the workshop.

CBSG's process is geared toward sharing available information, reaching agreement on the issues and available information, and then making useful and practical management recommendations for the species and habitat.

At the beginning of the workshop, the participants shared with the group their personal goals and desired outcomes as well as what they thought was the primary challenge for sustainable management of the Butler's gartersnake over the next 25 years. Based on the responses, Phil Miller created five working groups that would address the majority of the identified challenges.

Working Groups

- Communications and Outreach
- Population Management
- Habitat Management - Sociological Aspects
- Habitat Management - Biological Aspects
- Site Characterization and Prioritization.

Participants self selected which working group they became a member of and they remained in that group for the remainder of the workshop.

Quick Overview of the Process

- | | |
|--------|--|
| Task 1 | Brain-storm, group, and prioritize Problems/Issues |
| Task 2 | Data Assembly and Analysis |
| Task 3 | Identify and Prioritize Goals |
| Task 4 | Develop and Prioritize Action Steps |

After each task, the working groups would assemble during a plenary session to report what their group had generated. Between the goal prioritization and action step development (tasks 3 and 4), all of the groups met during a plenary session to prioritize the goals under a single set of criteria. Every participant voted on what they believed to be the top 5 goals, out of the 25 listed (5 from each of the 5 groups). Actions were identified for these top rated goals.

Top Rated Goals

- (33) Identify and promote potential funding sources and incentives to implement the Conservation Strategy
- (33) Develop and implement a funding strategy for habitat management.
- (27) Obtain a greater understanding of Butler's Garter Snake population density (population size and distribution)

in order to refine quantitative targets to ensure self sustaining viable populations in managed lands in SE WI in perpetuity

- (27) Develop methods to equally and fairly share costs associated with management and protection of habitat
- (19) Maintain existing suitable habitat and enhance poor quality habitat.
- (18) Prioritize sites in greater detail based on both socio-economic and biological issues
- (17) Determine local and regional planning opportunities to identify lands and potential compatible uses that can significantly affect BGS protection/management
- (15) Institute a proactive plan for preservation
- (12) Develop regulatory framework with flexibility in design and certainty in process

Participants worked hard for the 3.5 day workshop. Concrete management actions and responsibilities were identified. Thanks to this hardwork, a Stakeholder Workshop Report is currently in draft. The final report will be complete later this spring and available for download from the CBSG website: <http://www.cbsg.org/>

CONSERVATION STRATEGY - WORK TO BE DONE

Using the Stakeholder Workshop Report as the foundation, the WDNR aims to have a revised Conservation Strategy this spring. There is still much work that need to be done in making this translation. In keeping with the process that CBSG and the Stakeholder Workshop has laid out, the Conserva-

tion Strategy revision will be transparent and will be done in a cooperative manner.

At the Stakeholder Workshop, it was determined that a follow-up meeting should take place to develop regulatory framework with flexibility in design and certainty in process. This

regulatory framework meeting will consist of representatives of WDNR regulators, industry, commercial, residential, utility, MMSD, and local municipalities. Problems will be identified and either the tier process will be revised or a new process will be created.

STATE WILDLIFE GRANTS AVAILABLE

Thanks to the untiring efforts of the more than 4700 member groups of the Teaming With Wildlife Coalition, Congress passed the State Wildlife Grants (SWG) program in 2001. As a result, federal dollars are funneling into states to prevent species and habitats from becoming endangered. Congress has not yet decided on the amount of federal funding that will be appropriated for the SWG program in 2007, but the Department estimates that between \$400,000 and \$1,000,000 will be available for projects.

The SWG program is designed to fund projects that help implement the Wildlife Action Plan. Wisconsin's Wildlife Action Plan can be found at: <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/er/WWAP/explore/>

Wisconsin's Wildlife Action Plan identifies: 1) which native wildlife species are most at risk (Species of Greatest Conservation Need), 2) what habitats (natural communities) they are associated with, and 3) where they are likely to occur throughout the state (Ecological Landscapes).

Proposals for the Butler's gartersnake, a Species of Greatest Conservation Need, should address one or more threats or issues, or conservation actions as identified in the Wildlife Action Plan.



All of the materials needed to apply for funding, including the Request for Proposals, Project Requirements, Grant Application and Grant Budget, are available on the Department's website.

Applications are due March 13, 2007: <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/er/swg/>

LANDOWNER INCENTIVE PROGRAM

The Landowner Incentive Program (LIP) is a grant program that helps private landowners to manage and restore habitat for at-risk (rare) species on their land. The program provides up to 75% of the project cost for eligible projects and provides technical assistance to landowners. The program is funded by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and

administered by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

Private landowners, individuals or groups (e.g., land conservancies or trusts, watershed councils, community organizations, or conservation organizations) proposing projects that will take place on privately (non-government) owned land may apply. Eligible projects

under LIP include, but are not limited to, conducting prescribed burns, restoring native vegetation, and removing invasive and woody species to benefit at-risk species. Projects must also occur in one of the priority areas.

The Butler's gartersnake is considered an at-risk species and its range is within one of LIP's priority areas.

Check the LIP website in March 2007 for application materials and deadlines

<http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/er/wlip/>

For More Information Contact:

Terrell Jeanne Hyde * Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources * Bureau of Endangered Resources *
P.O. Box 7921 * Madison, WI 53707-7921 * 608/264-9255 * terrell.hyde@wisconsin.gov